special education reading project

Instructional Decision-Making Procedures for Ensuring Appropriate Instruction for Struggling Students

University of Texas
Center *for* Reading
& Language Arts

Texas Education Agency
Division of Special Education

www.texasreading.org

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Introduction and Purpose

Introduction

Substantial numbers of students are identified as having a learning disability because they have not received appropriate academic instruction and behavioral support. Referrals to special education may stem from a lack of appropriate instruction in reading and math, a lack of appropriate behavioral interventions, or a lack of understanding by professionals about English proficiency. For some of these students, early intervention that consists of research-based practices may prevent referrals to special education.

There are no clear legal, philosophical, or practical reasons for why students with learning disabilities today cannot be educated successfully in public schools. Campus-based administrators and educators are responsible for ensuring that appropriate instruction is implemented for struggling students. Implementation of appropriate instruction is a critical factor in determining whether struggling students and students with learning disabilities and their families are effectively served in public schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this booklet is to provide campus-based administrators and educators with procedures for ensuring appropriate instruction for students struggling with reading, mathematics, and behavior, and for students who are English language learners (ELL). The procedures in this booklet can be used by educators to reduce referrals to special education and by school teams to identify supplemental instructional practices. Administrators and educators can also use the information gathered from implementing these procedures at the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) meeting to ensure that lack of appropriate instruction is not the reason for why a student is determined to have a disability.

Educators can critically examine practices long before students are referred to special education to ensure that appropriate instruction is occurring for all children, including struggling students.

Using the procedures in this booklet before students are referred for special education evaluation can reduce the number of referrals to special education due to inadequate early instruction.

The procedures in this booklet are intended for administrators and educators who work with students at the kindergarten through third-grade level. This booklet should be used in conjunction with other Resources provided by the State on effective early interventions to prevent academic failure and to reduce referrals to special education. See Appendix A for a listing of some of these Resources. Refer to Appendix B for additional information about the legislation upon which this booklet is based.

How to Use This Booklet

There are three sections in this booklet: English Language Learners, Reading and Mathematics Instruction, and Positive Behavioral Supports. Procedures for ensuring appropriate instruction for struggling students are provided for each section. The following steps can guide the use of procedures for each section in this booklet. Figure 1 provides a flowchart for using this booklet.

Step 1 Select a section or sections in this booklet.

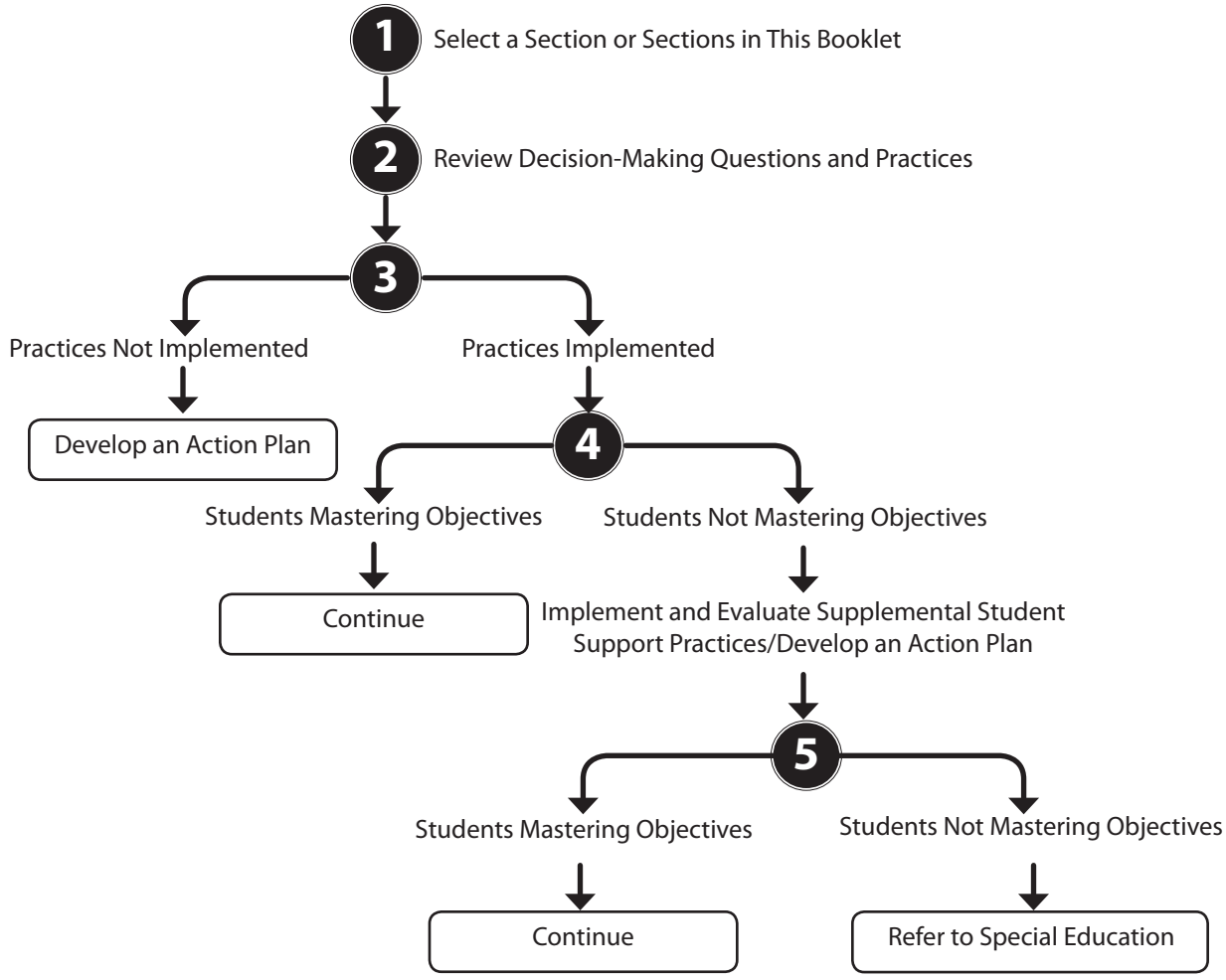
Step 2 Review the decision-making questions and practices.

Step 3 Determine if the practices are implemented; if not, develop an action plan.

Step 4 Determine through assessment practices if students are mastering objectives. If not, implement and evaluate supplemental student support practices.

Step 5 Determine through assessment practices if students are mastering objectives after supplemental student support practices are implemented. If not, refer the student to special education.

Figure 1. Procedures for ensuring appropriate instruction for struggling students.



English Language Learners

Decision-Making Questions and Practices for English Language Learners

Use the following questions to determine if effective practices are in place for all students.

1. Conduct a campus (K–3) assessment by reviewing the questions and practices below.
2. Identify practices that are not implemented regularly.
3. Develop an action plan.
4. Monitor the action plan.

Assessment Practices

Do we use appropriate assessment procedures to identify the instructional needs of, and to plan for and monitor instruction for, struggling students?

Many English language learners fail and are retained in grade, score poorly on achievement tests, are inappropriately referred to special education, or drop out of school. The use of appropriate assessment and intervention practices can help to reduce this trend. What assessment practices can teachers use to document student difficulties?

In your grade-level or vertical teams, review each practice and check the box that most closely indicates its frequency.

	All the time	Sometimes*	Not at all*
1. Assessment is conducted to analyze performance in the native language and in English.	☐	☐	☐
2. Data are used to identify gaps in skills and knowledge.	☐	☐	☐
3. Curriculum-based assessments (e.g., using observations, inventories, work samples) are conducted.	☐	☐	☐
4. Portfolios are maintained to document student progress in both L1 (native language) and L2 (second language) and to gauge the success of clinical teaching.	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Do we implement appropriate curriculum and instruction to ensure the success of English language learners and prevent school failure?

In your grade-level or vertical team, review each practice and check the box that indicates the presence or absence of the practice.

		yes	no*
1.	Do teachers facilitate the development of essential language and literacy skills at a student's level of oral language proficiency in English?	☐	☐
2.	Do teachers provide opportunities for students to interact with peers or adults who speak their native language?	☐	☐
3.	Do teachers provide meaningful opportunities to use English and interact with peers?	☐	☐
4.	Do teachers preview lessons to be conducted in English and in the native language, if possible?	☐	☐
5.	Do teachers use language during instruction that is comprehensible and meaningful to students?	☐	☐
6.	Does the instruction build on words and concepts that transition easily from one language to another? (This helps students access what they know about the topic in their first language and apply it to English.)	☐	☐
7.	Do teachers adjust the level of English vocabulary to the appropriate level for the student?	☐	☐
8.	Do teachers repeat, rephrase, and extend the students' language to support language learning?	☐	☐
9.	Do teachers use nonverbal cues, including gestures, facial expressions, dramatic portrayals, physical responses, pictures, and concrete objects?	☐	☐
10.	Do teachers slow the pace of speech, but keep it natural? Do teachers enunciate clearly?	☐	☐
11.	Do teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in extended dialogues and concentrate on second language learning in small groups and one-to-one settings?	☐	☐
12.	Do teachers simplify vocabulary? Do teachers teach key vocabulary words?	☐	☐
13.	Does the instruction activate background knowledge and connect to students' lives?	☐	☐
14.	Do teachers provide discussions about a topic prior to reading and make connections to students' lives?	☐	☐
15.	Do teachers repeat key points and main ideas during the course of the lesson?	☐	☐
16.	Do teachers review key points and main ideas at the conclusion?	☐	☐
17.	Do teachers use videos and pictures to provide a context for language and conceptual content?	☐	☐
18.	Do teachers preview the main idea?	☐	☐
19.	Do teachers use graphic organizers, charts, and other visuals to enhance comprehension?	☐	☐
20.	Do teachers provide opportunities for discussion of topics?	☐	☐
21.	Do teachers provide extra support for students who speak dialects, especially when they begin to decode and spell words?	☐	☐
22.	Do teachers use instructional materials that are appropriate to the student's culture and other background characteristics?	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan for any item marked "no."*

Action Plan

Participants: _____ Date: _____

Prioritize Practices to Address	Identify and Describe Resources and Activities	Identify Timeline and Person Responsible
1		
2		
3		
4		

Possible Activities

- Need Instructional Materials
- Request Professional Development
- Need Technology Support
- Request Support from Reading/Math Specialist
- Request In-class Coaching/Support

Other Activities

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Supplemental Student Support Practices for English Language Learners

Do we implement appropriate supplemental student support practices for struggling students?

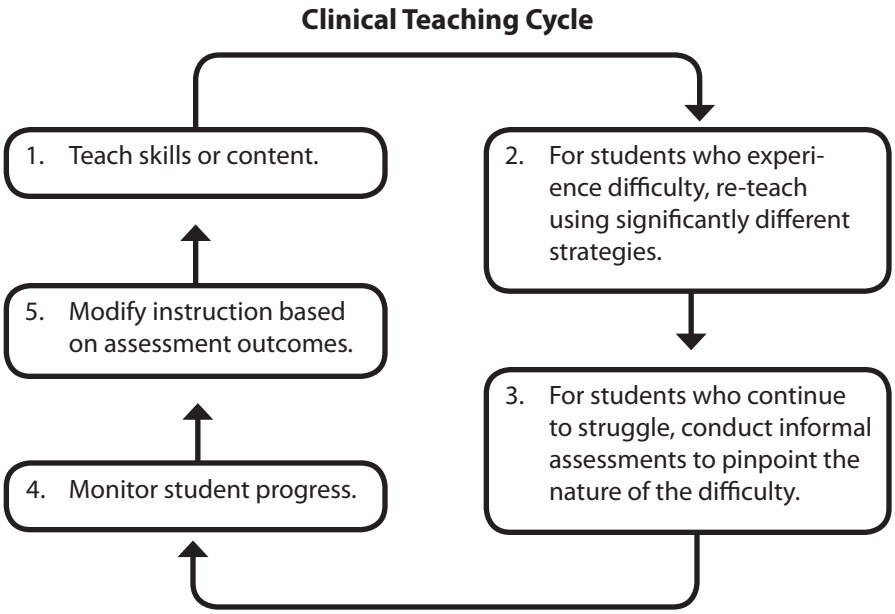
Some students will continue to struggle to learn the academic content of the grade level, even after appropriate assessment, curriculum, and instructional practices are in place. It is advisable to implement small-group supplemental student support practices in addition to current whole-class instructional practices.

		Pending	In Progress	Completed	Date
1.	Initiate a problem-solving team.	☐	☐	☐	_____
2.	Conduct additional student assessment to determine problems.	☐	☐	☐	_____
3.	Identify practices necessary to help the student.	☐	☐	☐	_____
4.	Determine the necessity for a school support team for English language learners, an English language learner specialist, in-class coaching, and so forth.	☐	☐	☐	_____
5.	Write a Student Support Action Plan for English language learners.	☐	☐	☐	_____
6.	Monitor and assess student progress regularly.	☐	☐	☐	_____
7.	Reassess and refine the Student Support Action Plan for English language learners.	☐	☐	☐	_____
8.	Refer the student for special education evaluation if minimal progress is determined through assessment.	☐	☐	☐	_____

Students must be provided supplemental practices as soon as they begin to struggle. Unless problems are resolved quickly, students will be at greater risk for special education referral. Clinical teaching is provided as an example of a practice that can help English language learners overcome academic and behavioral problems.

How does the clinical teaching cycle work?

When students experience difficulty, implement a clinical teaching cycle.



If clinical teaching does not resolve the problem, teachers should have access to additional Resources and support practices to help them address the needs of struggling learners. Such practices can include school-based problem-solving teams or consultation.

What are the steps of the Teacher Assistance Team Process?

Request assistance from a Teacher Assistance Team composed of general education teachers.

Teacher Assistance Team Process

Step 1: The teacher requests assistance from the team.

Step 2: The team coordinator reviews the request and obtains additional information, if necessary.

Step 3: The coordinator arranges a classroom observation, if appropriate.

Step 4: A team meeting is held.

Step 5: The team designs an intervention plan.

Step 6: The teacher implements the plan.

Step 7: A follow-up team meeting is held to assess progress.

Step 8: Repeat process if steps are unsuccessful. If successful, process is complete.

How can peers or expert consultants assist?

Request consultative services from peers, ESL teachers, and special educators.

Peers can share instructional ideas, observe in each other's classes, and share instructional Resources.

ESL teachers can demonstrate strategies to successfully integrate English language learners into general education classrooms.

General classroom teachers can meet with ESL teachers to coordinate content instruction and ESL lessons.

Special educators can share materials, strategies, and approaches that they have found to be successful in addressing academic and behavioral problems.

What are alternative programs and services?

General education must have programs and services (e.g., tutoring, remedial reading programs, counseling) for students with special learning needs that cannot be attributed to learning disabilities. Students who should have access to support services include students who are not performing at grade level because of excessive absences, immigrant children who arrive in U.S. schools without any prior education, or students who are experiencing emotional problems (e.g., when they lose a parent or their parents divorce).

Student Support Action Plan for English Language Learners

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher: _____ Team Member: _____

Date Plan Developed: _____ Date Plan Evaluated: _____

Student Support Practice	Resources, Support, and Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Progress-Monitoring Procedure

Requested Resources/Support:

- In-class coaching
- ELL Specialist
- Materials
- Other: _____

_____

_____

Administrative Practices for English Language Learners

Are administrative practices in place to support educators of struggling students?

Principals are responsible for ensuring that all students, including English language learners, meet high standards and experience success in school. They should routinely evaluate the effectiveness of special language and general education instructional opportunities for second language learners.

Are the following practices available on our campus?

Teacher Language Proficiency	**yes**	**no***
In the language/dialect other than English (L1)	☐	☐
In English (L2)	☐	☐
Student Language Proficiency	**yes**	**no***
In the language/dialect other than English	☐	☐
In English	☐	☐
Teacher Knowledge of	**yes**	**no***
Second language acquisition	☐	☐
Cultural influences on learning	☐	☐
Assessment of L1 and/or L2 language skills	☐	☐
Assessment of L1 and/or L2 literacy skills	☐	☐
Effective L1 and/or L2 instruction for English language learners	☐	☐
Clinical teaching	☐	☐
Assessment of skills in other content areas	☐	☐
Informal assessment strategies and progress monitoring	☐	☐
Adapting instruction for English language learners	☐	☐
Partnerships with parents and families	☐	☐
Instruction/Intervention	**yes**	**no***
Native language instruction and/or instruction in English as a second language	☐	☐
Language acquisition and development across the curriculum	☐	☐
Opportunities to interact with native English speakers	☐	☐
Opportunities to interact with diverse cultural groups	☐	☐
Modifications to address language-specific needs	☐	☐
Plan to develop and/or transition students from L1 to L2 language and literacy	☐	☐
Higher order skills	☐	☐
Explicit, basic skills instruction (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics)	☐	☐

continued on next page

	yes	no*
Literature-based instruction (access to high-quality literature, thematic units, journals, etc.)	☐	☐
Purposeful, relevant content instruction in L1	☐	☐
Purposeful, relevant content instruction using sheltered English strategies	☐	☐
Collaborative learning	☐	☐
Accommodation of cognitive style differences (e.g., inductive vs. deductive)	☐	☐
Accommodation of preferred style of participation (e.g., teacher vs. student directed; small vs. large group)	☐	☐
Learning-to-learn strategies	☐	☐
Instructional Materials	**yes**	**no***
Available in the native language and for ESL support	☐	☐
Perspectives and contributions of diverse groups	☐	☐
Stereotyping, ethnocentrism, sexism, "handicapism," and so forth are avoided	☐	☐
Diverse groups depicted as having varying abilities	☐	☐
Diverse groups shown in positions of power	☐	☐
Diverse groups shown engaged in a broad range of social and professional activities	☐	☐
Diverse groups shown as having a broad range of physical features	☐	☐
Historical events represented from the perspectives of various groups	☐	☐
Personally meaningful to the life experiences of students from different racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds	☐	☐
Culturally diverse content, examples, and experiences are comparable in kind, significance, magnitude, and function to those selected from the mainstream culture	☐	☐
Procedures to Inform Parents Regularly About Progress Toward Annual Goals	**yes**	**no***
Progress in L1	☐	☐
Progress in L2	☐	☐
Participation in State- or District-Wide Assessments	**yes**	**no***
In L1	☐	☐
In L2	☐	☐
Modifications or accommodations required: _____	☐	☐
If exempt, reasons why: _____	☐	☐
Instructional Alternatives for Struggling Learners	**yes**	**no***
Peer or expert consultation	☐	☐
General education problem-solving teams	☐	☐
Tutorial programs	☐	☐
Developmental and/or remedial programs	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an administrator's action plan for any item marked "no."*

Administrator's Action Plan

Administrator's Practice Priorities	Activities	Timeline	Resources and Support Systems

Possible Resources

- Area Superintendent
- Curriculum Coordinator
- Education Service Center
- ELL Specialist
- Parents and Community
- Professional Development Workshop
- Special Education Coordinator
- University

Referring to Special Education

When should English language learners be referred to special education?

Unless the general education system has programs and services for students such as the ones described, teachers may feel that they have no alternative but to refer students to special education.

When prevention and early intervention efforts fail to resolve learning problems, then referral to special education is warranted. Referral committees should consider the following questions before recommending a comprehensive evaluation.

Educators should be sure that the characteristics exhibited by the student are not confused with characteristics of students with language or learning disabilities (see Appendix A).

Referral Consideration Questions	**yes**	**no**
In addition to the teacher who is making the referral, have others (e.g., the ESL teacher, remedial program personnel, parents) noted similar difficulties?	☐	☐
Does the problem exist across contexts (e.g., in general education and ESL classes, at school, at home)?	☐	☐
Are the problems evident in the student's first language?	☐	☐
Has the student failed to learn to read in the native language, despite effective literacy instruction in that language?	☐	☐
Does the student exhibit the same types of problematic behaviors in the native language as in English?	☐	☐
Is the student's progress in acquiring English significantly different from that of peers who started at about the same level of English language proficiency and have had comparable instruction?	☐	☐
Is there evidence that difficulties can be explained by cultural differences?	☐	☐
Has the student had consistent native language instruction? If yes, for how long? _____	☐	☐
Has the student had consistent English as a second language instruction? If yes,	☐	☐
for how long? _____		
Do grade placements (social promotion, retention) reflect underachievement?	☐	☐
Are there significant life events (e.g., illness, accident) that might explain the problems?	☐	☐
Are there teacher variables (e.g., attitudes, bias, expectations, language proficiency, certification, experience) that might affect performance?	☐	☐
Do data show that the student did not respond well to general education interventions?	☐	☐
Are there other variables that could explain the difficulties?	☐	☐
If yes, list: _____		

Reading and Mathematics Instruction

Decision-Making Questions and Practices for Reading and Mathematics

Use the following questions to determine if effective practices are in place for all students.

1. Conduct a campus (K–3) assessment by reviewing the questions and practices below.
2. Identify practices that are not implemented regularly.
3. Develop an action plan.
4. Monitor the action plan.

Questions	Practices	
	Reading	Mathematics
1. Do we use appropriate assessment practices to identify the instructional needs of, and to plan for and monitor instruction for, struggling students?	page 26	page 26
2. Do we implement appropriate curriculum and instruction for struggling students?	pages 27, 28, 29, 30, 33	pages 27, 31, 32, 34
3. Do we implement appropriate supplemental student support practices for struggling students?	pages 36, 37	pages 36, 37
4. Are administrative practices in place to support educators of struggling students?	page 39	page 39

Assessment Practices

Do we use appropriate assessment practices to identify instructional needs of struggling students?

Assessment is conducted when teachers first begin to work with students to determine their current levels of performance in relation to the reading and mathematics curriculum for their grade level. Assessment data are used to inform instruction and to identify instructional groups. Assessment is conducted according to district- and state-identified timelines to measure student achievement relative to benchmarks and year-end goals.

Do we use appropriate assessment practices to plan for and monitor instruction for struggling students?

Frequent assessment or progress monitoring is conducted to determine how students are performing in relation to their instructional objectives and benchmarks. A critical purpose for collecting progress-monitoring data is to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices in helping students reach year-end academic goals.

Research Note on Progress Monitoring

Students whose teachers collect and record data regularly and use the data to make instructional decisions show more academic progress than students whose teachers do not use progress-monitoring procedures. Teachers' accuracy in judging student progress increases when they use progress-monitoring procedures consistently (Stecker & Fuchs, 2000).

In grade-level or vertical teams, review each practice and check the box that most closely indicates its frequency.

		All the time	Sometimes*	Not at all*
1.	Assessment is conducted prior to instruction to determine student performance levels.	☐	☐	☐
2.	Data are used to identify skills to be taught.	☐	☐	☐
3.	Data are used to group and regroup students for instruction.	☐	☐	☐
4.	Progress-monitoring is conducted on skills being taught.	☐	☐	☐
5.	Error analysis is conducted to identify specific skills that are problematic.	☐	☐	☐
6.	Progress-monitoring data are compared to benchmarks and used to inform instructional practices.	☐	☐	☐
7.	District and state assessment timelines are used to monitor student progress compared to benchmarks and year-end goals.	☐	☐	☐
8.	Teachers are trained to administer, score, and interpret assessment measures they are asked to administer.	☐	☐	☐

*Note: Develop an action plan.

Curriculum and Instruction

Do we implement appropriate curriculum and instruction for struggling students?

Reading

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) identify eight essential, interrelated reading components: oral language development, print awareness, phonological awareness, word identification, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and spelling. These components constitute the basic core reading curriculum. A wide range of reading materials at various levels that foster an appreciation for reading and literature, and that meet students' specific instructional needs, should be used (see Appendix A for references that contain more comprehensive explanations of effective early reading curriculum and instruction).

Mathematics

The TEKS identify six essential components of the mathematics curriculum for Grades K–3: (a) number, operation, and quantitative reasoning; (b) patterns, relationships, and algebraic thinking; (c) geometry and spatial reasoning; (d) measurement; (e) probability and statistics; and (f) underlying processes and mathematical tools. These components make up the basic core mathematics curriculum. Materials for early mathematics instruction should address these components. A wide range of mathematics materials at various levels should be used (see Appendix A).

Reading Curricula and Practices

Components of an early reading curriculum are listed, along with examples of practices. No sequence of instruction is implied with this list; rather, teachers work on several components at a time. In your grade-level or vertical teams, review each practice and check the box that most closely indicates its frequency of implementation. Blank boxes are provided to add other practices.

Oral Language Development (K–3): Students have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of listening and speaking.	**3–5 times weekly**	**1–2 times weekly***	**0 times weekly***
1. Teachers engage students in discussions on a variety of topics throughout the day.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers focus on activities, such as songs, chants, and poems, that develop language concepts and build vocabulary.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers provide activities that include talking, listening, and following directions.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Print Awareness (K–1): Students have opportunities to develop an understanding of written language.			
1. Teachers display written language prominently in a variety of forms, such as signs, labels, notes, posters, calendars, and directions.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers provide opportunities for students to handle books, including guidance on how to turn pages, find the top and bottom of pages, and tell the difference between front and back covers.	☐	☐	☐
3. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Phonological Awareness (K–1): Students recognize the separate sounds (phonemes) of spoken language and how they can be segmented (pulled apart), blended (put together), and manipulated (added, deleted, and substituted).			
1. Teachers engage students auditorily in a variety of language games, including identifying rhyming words, identifying the number of syllables in words, segmenting words into syllables, and blending sounds to say words.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers provide activities that help students understand words, in and out of the classroom.	☐	☐	☐
3. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

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Word Identification (K–3): Students use letter-sound correspondence and structural analysis to decode words.	**3–5 times weekly**	**1–2 times weekly***	**0 times weekly***
1. Teachers provide activities to teach letter names.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers provide activities to teach letter-sound relationships systematically.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers provide activities in which children manipulate letters to change words and spelling patterns.	☐	☐	☐
4. Teachers teach decoding strategies that rely mostly on print, rather than on pictures or context, and that focus on the relationships between sounds and letters, word families, word parts, and blending.	☐	☐	☐
5. Teachers teach decoding strategies that focus on structural analysis, root words, and affixes.	☐	☐	☐
6. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Fluency (1–3): Students read with appropriate rate, accuracy, and prosody.			
1. Teachers engage students in activities that build fluent reading.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers use decodable stories (i.e., stories that contain letters and sounds studied in word identification instruction); students can read at least 90% of the words accurately.	☐	☐	☐
3. Error correction procedures are used for unknown words.	☐	☐	☐
4. Students graph their rate scores.	☐	☐	☐
5. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Reading Comprehension (K–3): Students use strategies before, during, and after reading to understand, reflect upon, and critically interpret text.			
1. Teachers provide students with strategies for previewing selections and making connections to their prior knowledge.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers provide students with strategies for repairing understanding during reading when comprehension breaks down.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers provide students with strategies for summarizing content.	☐	☐	☐
4. Teachers provide students with activities for reading different genres critically.	☐	☐	☐
5. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

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Vocabulary (K–3): Students understand word meanings, and comprehension continues to develop through explicit instruction, listening to literature, engaging in discussion, and reading.	**3–5 times weekly**	**1–2 times weekly***	**0 times weekly***
1. Teachers provide opportunities for reading a variety of materials.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers provide explicit instruction on important words.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers provide activities that encourage children to analyze word parts and contexts to understand word meanings.	☐	☐	☐
4. Teachers provide activities that encourage children to use new words in writing.	☐	☐	☐
5. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Spelling (K–3): Students use their knowledge of word identification skills to spell words.			
1. Teachers make connections between word identification and spelling instruction.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers focus on activities that help children attend to spelling conventions.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers engage students in proofreading activities.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

Mathematics Curricula and Practices

Components of an early mathematics curriculum are listed, along with examples of practices. No sequence of instruction is implied with this list; rather, teachers work on several components at a time. In your grade-level or vertical teams, review each practice and check the box that most closely indicates its frequency of implementation. Blank boxes are provided to add other practices.

Number, Operation, and Quantitative Reasoning (K–3): Students use numbers in expressing quantities and relationships and use basic operations (K–2: +, -) to solve problems, and develop basic concepts of fractions and decimals (3).	**3–5 times weekly**	**1–2 times weekly***	**0 times weekly***
1. Teachers engage students in activities with sets of concrete objects that represent quantities and help them understand basic math operations or concepts.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers provide students with sufficient time and activities to master basic number facts and basic operations.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers engage students in activities in which they learn fraction names and compare parts of whole objects or sets of objects in a problem situation using concrete models.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Patterns, Relationships, and Algebraic Thinking (K–3): Students represent objects or relationships, make predictions, and solve problems with patterns (K–2) and appropriate language and organizational structures (3).			
1. Teachers provide opportunities for students to use concrete and pictorial patterns to predict what comes next and solve problems.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers provide activities based on real-life situations that ask students to identify patterns in numbers (odd, even, patterns in place value) and patterns in basic operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers provide students with activities that help them recognize patterns in numbers and operations.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Geometry and Spatial Reasoning (K–3): Students describe shapes, solids, and locations in the physical world with informal language (K–2) and with formal language (3).			
1. Teachers provide activities requiring students to identify congruent shapes and create shapes with lines of symmetry using concrete models and technologies.	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

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	3–5 times weekly	1–2 times weekly*	0 times weekly*
2. Teachers engage students in activities asking them to locate numbers by points on a line and to name numbers (whole numbers, fractions) on a line.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers engage students in activities that teach the characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes and develop mathematical arguments about geometric relationships.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Measurement (K–3): Students develop measurement concepts (K–2) and use numbers, standard units, and measurement tools for description, comparison, and estimation of objects, and for problem solving (3).			
1. Teachers provide opportunities for students to understand standard units and use them appropriately for description, estimation, and problem solving.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers engage students in problem-solving activities in which they are required to measure length, area, and so forth.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers engage students in activities that apply measurement techniques, tools, and formulas.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Probability and Statistics (K–3): Students organize data, appropriately display the data (K–2), and interpret the data (3).			
1. Teachers engage students in activities in which they represent events with concrete manipulatives or drawings.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers ensure that students use standard units of length, weight, capacity, and time.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers encourage students to display data in pictographs and bar graphs, and teach them how to interpret information from the graphs.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐
Underlying Processes and Mathematical Tools (K–3): Students use problem solving, language and communication connections, formal and informal reasoning technology, and other mathematics tools.			
1. Teachers have students solve real-life problems and engage in mathematical conversations.	☐	☐	☐
2. Teachers engage students in activities in which they explain and record observations using objects, words, pictures, numbers, and technology.	☐	☐	☐
3. Teachers provide students with activities that develop appropriate problem-solving strategies, including drawing a picture, looking for a pattern, systematically guessing and checking, making a table, working a simpler problem, or working backwards to solve a problem.	☐	☐	☐
4. Other: _____	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

Reading Instruction and Practices

Components of early reading instruction are listed, along with examples of practices. In your grade-level or vertical teams, review each practice and check the box that most closely indicates its frequency of implementation.

Delivery of Instruction	**Done consistently**	**Not done consistently***	**Not done at all***
1. Explicit instruction using modeling and thinking aloud	☐	☐	☐
2. Guided practice with multiple opportunities to practice and review skills	☐	☐	☐
3. Corrective feedback when mistakes occur	☐	☐	☐
4. Checking for student understanding	☐	☐	☐
5. Teaching skills to mastery	☐	☐	☐
Instructional Grouping			
1. Small (3–5 students), similar-ability groups of students receiving 20 minutes of instruction identified for their needs	☐	☐	☐
2. Student pairs with a higher performing student helping a struggling student	☐	☐	☐
3. Instructional grouping based on assessment of instructional needs	☐	☐	☐
Instructional Materials/Technology	**Present and used consistently**	**Present but used rarely***	**Not present***
1. Classroom materials with various difficulty levels for the range of reading abilities in the class	☐	☐	☐
2. Classroom libraries in which books are grouped by reading level so that children can select interesting materials at their reading levels	☐	☐	☐
3. Decodable texts that emphasize the sound-symbol relationships being taught	☐	☐	☐
4. Books on tape and CD-ROM that enable children to read repeatedly to build fluency and comprehension	☐	☐	☐
5. Materials to develop early reading skills, including magnetic letters, letter tiles, flashcards, and story maps for comprehension	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

Mathematics Instruction and Practices

Components of an early mathematics curriculum are listed, along with examples of practices. In your grade-level or vertical teams, review each practice and check the box that most closely indicates its frequency of implementation.

Delivery of Instruction	**Done consistently**	**Not done consistently***	**Not done at all***
1. Instruction based on students' informal mathematical knowledge	☐	☐	☐
2. Instruction based on various activities that are active, and rich in mathematical language	☐	☐	☐
3. Explicit instruction using modeling and thinking aloud	☐	☐	☐
4. Balanced instruction with conceptual understanding and procedural skills development	☐	☐	☐
5. Corrective feedback and appropriate reinforcement	☐	☐	☐
6. Guided practice and sufficient time to review prerequisite skills and practice new skills	☐	☐	☐
7. Teaching skills to mastery	☐	☐	☐
Instructional Grouping			
1. Small groups (3–5 students), similar-ability groups of students receiving 20 minutes of instruction identified for their needs.	☐	☐	☐
2. Student pairs with a higher performing student helping a struggling student	☐	☐	☐
3. Instructional grouping based on assessment of instructional needs	☐	☐	☐
4. Various grouping formats, depending on the purpose of the lesson and the needs of students	☐	☐	☐
Instructional Materials/Technology	**Present and used consistently**	**Present but used rarely***	**Not present***
1. Diverse activities of various levels of difficulty to meet students' needs	☐	☐	☐
2. Classroom materials that cover and enhance early mathematics skills	☐	☐	☐
3. Grade-appropriate mathematics texts that cover the critical components of a mathematics curriculum for the early grades and are based on real-life application	☐	☐	☐
4. Concrete and visual manipulatives for understanding and communication	☐	☐	☐
5. Classroom materials that include game-like activities to engage students	☐	☐	☐
6. CD-ROM and activities that enable students to solve problems systematically and repeatedly for mastery and transfer	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan.*

Action Plan

Participants: _____ Date: _____

Prioritize Practices to Address	Identify and Describe Resources and Activities	Identify Timeline and Person Responsible
1		
2		
3		
4		

Possible Activities

- Need Instructional Materials
- Request Professional Development
- Need Technology Support
- Request Support from Reading/Math Specialist
- Request In-class Coaching/Support

Other Activities

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Supplemental Student Support Practices for Reading and Mathematics

Do we implement appropriate supplemental student support practices for struggling students?

Some students will continue to struggle to learn the academic content of the grade level, even after appropriate assessment and instructional practices are in place. It is advisable to implement small-group supplemental student support practices in addition to current whole class instructional practices.

		Pending	In-Progress	Completed	Date
1.	Initiate a problem-solving team.	☐	☐	☐	_____
2.	Conduct additional student assessment to identify problems.	☐	☐	☐	_____
3.	Identify instructional practices necessary to help the student (refer to Supplemental Practices and to Appendix C for additional ideas).	☐	☐	☐	_____
4.	Determine necessity for instructional materials, technology support, in-class coaching, and so forth.	☐	☐	☐	_____
5.	Write a Student Support action plan.	☐	☐	☐	_____
6.	Monitor and assess student progress regularly.	☐	☐	☐	_____
7.	Reassess and refine the Student Support Action Plan.	☐	☐	☐	_____
8.	Refer the student for special education evaluation if minimal progress is determined through ongoing assessment.	☐	☐	☐	_____

Supplemental Practices

Select practices to help students master instructional objectives. Record practices on the Student Support Action Plan.

Presentation Techniques

- Make learning visible and explicit.
- Use clear, simple directions.
- Adjust pacing.
- Highlight key information.
- Reduce amount of information/skills taught.
- Use study guides, semantic maps, and graphic organizers.
- Activate background knowledge.
- Allow alternative ways to demonstrate learning.
- Increase the amount of small-group instruction weekly.
- Change grouping from small groups to pairs.

Practice Techniques

- Use peer and cross-age tutoring.
- Use games.
- Use manipulatives.
- Provide more frequent practice on less information/fewer skills.
- Use computer programs.
- Ensure mastery before moving on to next skill.
- Provide a variety of practice opportunities (e.g., manipulatives, problem solving, explanations).

Feedback Practices

- Use prompts to help students notice, find, and/or fix errors and write responses.
- Encourage students with prompts of encouragement.

Textbook/Materials

- Highlight key points/concepts.
- Provide books on tape/CD-ROM with study guides.
- Reduce amount of reading.
- Use shared reading or have peers read to students.
- Provide study guides.
- Highlight directions.
- Use high-interest/low-vocabulary books.
- Use trade books/textbooks written at various levels.

Content

- Use task analysis to divide tasks into smaller steps.
- Identify and check to see if students have prerequisite skills.
- Teach the vocabulary of instruction (e.g., direction words).
- Teach technical vocabulary.
- Relate concepts to each other using graphic organizers, such as semantic maps.

Check for Understanding

- Ask different levels of questions and encourage students to generate questions.
- Use a variety of ways for students to respond.
- Incorporate sufficient wait time.
- Teach self-monitoring, such as graphing progress.

Student Support Action Plan for Reading and Mathematics

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher: _____ Team Member: _____

Date Plan Developed: _____ Date Plan Evaluated: _____

Instructional Practices	Resources, Support, and Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Progress-Monitoring Procedure

Requested Resources/Support:

- In-class coaching
- Reading or Mathematics Specialist
- Materials
- Other: _____

_____

_____

Administrative Practices for Reading and Mathematics Instruction

Are administrative practices in place to support educators of struggling students?

Professional Expertise and Development	**yes**	**no***
Do I have in place specific systems that will assess the knowledge and skills of the instructional staff relative to the critical components of a reading curriculum for early grades?	☐	☐
Do I have in place specific systems that will assess the knowledge and skills of the instructional staff relative to the critical components of a mathematics curriculum for early grades?	☐	☐
Are there professional development activities for the identified knowledge and skill needs of instructional staff?	☐	☐
Do I have the expertise, or have I identified and designated a person on the school staff, to exercise the responsibility to work with teachers in selecting classroom materials?	☐	☐
Do I have an identified specialist to help teachers?	☐	☐
Data Systems and Analysis		
Do I have in place systems that supply data for assessing teacher proficiency and student success in utilizing the reading and mathematics materials currently used in this school?	☐	☐
Do I have in place formative systems to provide evidence of effectiveness of the instructional strategies being utilized throughout the year?	☐	☐
Do I have in place systems to provide information regarding student progress in reading and mathematics throughout the school year and not just at the end of the semester or end of the year?	☐	☐
Have I designated the person(s) responsible for monitoring student progress and instructional effectiveness and communicated to the instructional staff the processes and timelines involved?	☐	☐
Parents		
Do I have in place systems that ensure that information on student progress in reading and mathematics is communicated to parents?	☐	☐
Budget		
Do I budget Resources to support reading and mathematics instruction as a high priority in my school?	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an administrator's action plan for any item marked "no."*

Administrator's Action Plan

Administrator's Practice Priorities	Activities	Timeline	Resources and Support Systems

Possible Resources

- Area Superintendent
- Curriculum Coordinator
- Dyslexia Specialist
- Education Service Center
- Parents, Community
- Professional Development Workshop
- Special Education Coordinator
- University

Positive Behavioral Supports

Decision-Making Questions and Practices for Positive Behavioral Supports

Use the following questions to determine if effective practices are in place.

1. Conduct a campus (K–3) assessment by reviewing the questions and practices below.
2. Identify practices that are not implemented regularly.
3. Develop an action plan.
4. Monitor the action plan.

Questions	Practices
1. Do we use appropriate assessment practices to identify behavioral needs and to plan for and monitor behavioral intervention?	page 44
2. Do we implement appropriate intervention practices for teaching positive behaviors?	page 45
3. Do we implement appropriate supplemental student support behavior practices for struggling students?	pages 47, 48
4. Are administrative practices in place to support educators of struggling students?	page 50

Assessment Practices

Do we use appropriate assessment practices to identify behavioral needs?

Effective assessment practices document the environmental conditions that predict and maintain the occurrence of inappropriate student behavior. Most students respond to interventions based on the assessment practices described below. In grade-level or vertical teams, review each practice and check the box that most closely indicates its frequency of implementation.

	All the time	Sometimes*	Not at all*
Teacher interviews are conducted.**	☐	☐	☐
Student interviews are conducted.**	☐	☐	☐
Observations are conducted in settings where a student is having difficulty to identify antecedent events that trigger and consequent events that maintain student use of problem behavior (see Appendix A).	☐	☐	☐
Sufficient observation time (10–20 occurrences of the behavior) is allowed for clear identification of antecedent and consequence events related to problem behavior.	☐	☐	☐
Observations are conducted in settings where a student does not have difficulty, to identify antecedent and consequent events that promote appropriate behavior (see Appendix A).	☐	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan. **Assessment interviews are available from a variety of sources (see O'Neill et al., 1997).*

Do we use appropriate assessment practices to plan for and monitor behavioral intervention?

Sometimes, interventions are unsuccessful not because of their components, but rather because they were implemented inconsistently across staff and school contexts, or with insufficient time for the desired effect to occur. An intervention's failure may be due to inconsistency and/or a lack of opportunity over time.

The following procedure can be used to determine the effectiveness of interventions.

Step 1: List the specific interventions that were tried.

Step 2: For each intervention listed in Step 1, state how long the intervention was implemented.

Step 3: Provide data collected for each intervention. Summarize changes in levels of performance. (A good rule of thumb is a change in the desired direction of student performance within 2 weeks.)

Step 4: Indicate the meetings that were held to present the intent, procedures, and responsibilities of parties involved.

Intervention Practices for Teaching Positive Behavior

Do we implement appropriate intervention practices for teaching positive behavior?

For students who are at risk for school failure, teacher behavior and class organization play a large role. At-risk students are more dependent on the critical teaching behaviors of modeling, reinforcement, instructional planning, and organization of lessons that are designed to teach mastery. Essential behavior management practices are listed below.

In your grade-level or vertical team, review each practice and check the box that indicates the presence or absence of the practice.

	yes	no*
Is the classroom arrangement conducive to learning? Does the student have access to pertinent areas, people, or materials?	☐	☐
Does the student have a clear visual path to the material and/or presentation of lessons?	☐	☐
Is the classroom arranged to minimize distractions?	☐	☐
Are classroom expectations clearly presented as related to school-wide rules?	☐	☐
Are classroom expectations taught, reviewed, and promoted throughout the school day?	☐	☐
Are more positive comments made following desired behavior than negative comments following inappropriate behavior toward the student in a given day?	☐	☐
Is the student likely to get attention from staff for doing what is expected?	☐	☐
Does the teacher provide verbal (or other) reinforcement for achieving academic goals and for meeting behavioral expectations?	☐	☐
Does the teacher effectively use visual and verbal prompts to elicit appropriate behavior?	☐	☐
Does the teacher redirect misbehavior (i.e., state that an error has been made, ask the student what the appropriate behavior should be, provide opportunities for the student to demonstrate the behavior, and provide reinforcement for doing so)?	☐	☐
Does the teacher refrain from using reprimands (i.e., a response to problem behavior that has a negative tone and does not provide the student with the opportunity to practice and receive contingent reinforcement for correct behavior)?	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an action plan for any item marked "no."*

Action Plan

Participants: _____ Date: _____

Prioritize Practices to Address	Identify and Describe Resources and Activities	Identify Timeline and Person Responsible

Possible Activities

- Need Instructional Materials
- Request support from Behavior Specialist
- Request Professional Development
- Need Technology Support
- Request Support from Reading/Math Specialist
- Request In-class Coaching/Support

Other Activities

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Supplemental Student Support Behavior Practices

Do we implement appropriate supplemental student support behavior for struggling students?

Before a student is referred for evaluation for special education services, documentation of clear and consistent behavior management interventions across the school and/or classroom must be made. A referral to special education is appropriate only when a student continues to present challenging behavior despite intervention practices whose effectiveness is evidenced by the majority of students meeting the behavioral expectations. A particular student's behavior pattern must clearly differentiate him or her from other students. If more than 10% of students in a particular classroom or overall school have difficulty meeting a particular behavioral expectation, then school staff should first develop activities to help all students meet this expectation before individual supports are developed. It is only when sound school-wide programming and promotion of appropriate behavior is documented and found to be ineffective for a particular child that individualized supports should be developed.

		Pending	In-Progress	Completed	Date
1.	Initiate a problem-solving team.	☐	☐	☐	_____
2.	Conduct additional student assessment to identify problems.	☐	☐	☐	_____
3.	Determine behavior adaptations necessary to help the student (refer to Supplemental Behavior Practices Based on Function).	☐	☐	☐	_____
4.	Determine necessity for school behavior support team, behavior specialist, in-class coaching, and so forth.	☐	☐	☐	_____
5.	Write a Student Support Behavior Action Plan.	☐	☐	☐	_____
6.	Monitor and assess student progress regularly.	☐	☐	☐	_____
7.	Reassess and refine Student Support Behavior Action Plan.	☐	☐	☐	_____
8.	Refer student for special education evaluation if minimal progress is determined through assessment.	☐	☐	☐	_____

Supplemental Behavior Practices Based on Function

Select practices to help students master objectives. Record the practices in the first column on the Student Support Behavior Action Plan.

Assessment Components: Do you . . .

- Identify the specific school rules or classroom rules that the student is consistently not meeting?
- Provide a clear definition of problem behavior stated in observable and measurable terms?
- Identify antecedents to and consequences for problem behaviors?
- Identify the function of or purpose for each specific behavior of concern?
- Select a measurement system to document the number of times the behavior occurs?

For Student Behavioral Error: Do you . . .

- Provide a specific praise statement to other students who are meeting expectations?
- Provide redirection (get student's attention, state in neutral tone that an error has been made, state expected behavior, have student engage in appropriate behavior, provide praise statement contingent upon successful display of appropriate behavior)?

Effective Intervention: Have you . . .

- Removed the documented antecedents to problem behavior?
- Strengthened the antecedent to the desired behavior?
- Controlled access to the identified reinforcer of problem behavior?
- Provided a rich reinforcement schedule for appropriate behavior?
- Used reinforcers identified by students as important to them?
- Used interventions logically tied to functional behavioral assessment data?
- Developed an implementation plan that specifies each educator's role, and how consistent messages and responses by staff will occur?

Effective Behavior Managers: Do you consistently . . .

- Actively scan the environment to ensure that students are meeting expectations?
- Provide contingent and specific praise statements to those who are meeting expectations?
- Move around the environment and use proximity as a means to reduce problem behavior?
- Spend more time reinforcing appropriate behavior than responding and reacting to problem behavior?
- Actively teach and promote each specific behavior and routine they wish students to display?
- Monitor their effectiveness each day, and make modifications to how they prompt and respond to problem behavior?
- Use an established plan for responding to problem behaviors?
- Teach relevant, high-interest, skill-level-appropriate academic content in a well-paced manner?
- Use a variety of instructional formats?

Student Support Behavior Action Plan

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher: _____ Team Members: _____

Date Plan Developed: _____ Date Plan Evaluated: _____

Function/Practice	Resources, Support, and Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Progress-Monitoring Procedure

Requested Resources/Support:

- In-class coaching
- Behavior Support Team
- Behavior Specialist
- Other: _____

_____

_____

Administrative Practices for Positive Behavioral Supports

Are administrative practices in place to support educators of struggling students?

Professional Expertise and Development	**yes**	**no***
Do we have a school-based behavior support team?	☐	☐
Does our team have the required skills to provide positive behavior support for teachers?	☐	☐
If not, do we have a plan to increase school-level expertise in positive behavior support?	☐	☐
Do teachers have access to team expertise in an efficient manner—within one week, has the behavior support team scheduled and conducted an initial assessment?	☐	☐
Do I have knowledge and skill sufficient to analyze and recognize behavioral issues, cues, sanctions (positive and negative), and student behavioral responses to specific cues in the classroom environment? If not, do I have other professionals with such expertise who are consistently available in the school?	☐	☐
Do I have a behavioral specialist available on staff or quickly available who can assist teachers with the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student behavioral data?	☐	☐
Have I used the expertise of this staff member or specialist adequately to address the problems?	☐	☐
Data Systems and Analysis		
Does the school have systems in place to collect, record, and analyze student behavioral data, such as the correlation between discipline referrals and intervention strategies?	☐	☐
Have behavior referrals to the office increased or decreased this year compared with last year? Have I analyzed why?	☐	☐
Parents		
Do I have expertise available in the school to help teachers develop effective behavioral intervention strategies for students?	☐	☐

** Note: Develop an administrator's action plan for any item marked "no."*

Administrator's Action Plan

Administrator's Practice Priorities	Activities	Timeline	Resources and Support Systems

Possible Resources

- Area Superintendent
- Behavior Specialist
- Curriculum Coordinator
- Education Service Center
- Parents, Community
- Professional Development Workshop
- Special Education Coordinator
- University

References & Appendix

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Appendix A
Resources Section

English language learners (ELL)

Don't be confused. Students with language or learning disabilities and students acquiring English as a second language have similar characteristics.

- Articulation and pronunciation errors
- Poor comprehension
- Forget easily
- Cannot follow directions
- Poor oral language skills
- Syntactical and grammatical errors
- Low vocabulary
- Reading below grade level
- Poor spelling
- Anxious
- Short attention span
- Frequently off task
- Do not complete tasks
- Cannot work independently
- Shy, withdrawn
- Poor motivation
- Distractible
- Low self-esteem

Reading

From the Texas Education Agency:

- *3-Tier Reading Model*
- *Beginning Reading Instruction*
- *Comprehension Instruction*
- *Coordinating for Reading Instruction: General Education and Special Education Working Together*
- *Dyslexia and Related Disorders*
- *Essential Reading Strategies for the Struggling Reader: Activities for an Accelerated Reading Program*
- *Guidelines for Examining Phonics and Word Recognition Programs*
- *Practical Tips for Parents, in Both English and Spanish*
- *Promoting Vocabulary Development*
- *Research-Based Content Area Reading Instruction*

From other sources:

- *How Do I Know a Good Reading Intervention When I See One?,* published by the Texas Governor's Business Council
- *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children,* the 1998 National Research Council report
- *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*

Mathematics

- Educational JAVA Programs
  www.arcytech.org/java/
- Exemplary and Promising Mathematics Programs Reports
  www.enc.org/professional/federalResources/exemplary/promising/
- The Center for the Enhancement of Science and Mathematics Education
  www.lab.brown.edu/investigations/
- Mathematics TEKS Toolkit
  www.tenet.edu/teks/math/
- PBS Teacher Source
  www.pbs.org/teachersource

Behavior

- Center for Effective Collaboration and Practices
  www.air.org/cecp/
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
  www.cspv.org
- National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice
  www.edjj.org
- National Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support
  www.pbis.org
- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
  www. nichy.org
- Oregon Research Institute
  www.ori.org
- Oregon Social Learning Center
  www.oslc.org
- Texas Statewide Initiative on Positive Behavioral Supports

Appendix B
Information About the Legislation

The Law

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997

Section 614(b)

(4) Determination of Eligibility—Upon completion of administration of tests and other evaluation materials, the determination of whether the child is a child with a disability as defined in section 602(3) shall be made by a team of qualified professionals and the parent of the child in accordance with paragraph (5); and a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of determination of eligibility will be given to the parent.

(5) Special Rule for Eligibility Determination—In making a determination of eligibility under paragraph (4)(A), a child shall not be determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor of such determination is lack of instruction in reading or math or limited English proficiency.

The Committee Report

The committee intends that professionals who are involved in the evaluation of a child give serious consideration at the conclusion of the evaluation process to other factors that might be affecting a child's performance. There are substantial numbers of children who are likely to be identified as disabled because they have not previously received proper academic support. Such a child often is identified as learning disabled because the child has not been taught, in an appropriate or effective manner, the core skill of reading. Other cases might include children who are English Language Learners (ELL). The committee believes this provision (Special Rule for Eligibility Determination) will lead to fewer children being improperly included in special education programs where their actual difficulties stem from another cause and that this will lead schools to focus greater attention on these subjects in the early grades.

Appendix C
Ways to Adapt Instruction for Struggling Students

Activate and build students' background knowledge	Review/reteach previously taught information and skills	Present new material in small steps	Model procedures and/or "think aloud"
• Determine requisite knowledge/skills. • Build on what students already know. • Consider cultural and linguistic diversity	• Keep reviews frequent, brief, and spaced out over time. • Try multiple techniques when reteaching; vary presentation/format from initial instruction.	• Reduce the amount of new information presented at one time. • Use a logical sequence (e.g., progress from easier to more complex, separate easily confused concepts). • Include many examples and, when appropriate, nonexamples.	• Demonstrate how a task is done. • "Think aloud" and explain the thinking processes used.

Provide guided practice	Check for understanding	Provide appropriate feedback	Include opportunities for extensive practice
• Give helpful hints or reminders. • Clarify misconceptions. • Incorporate concrete manipulatives, graphic organizers, and/or hands-on activities. • Have students work in small groups or with partners.	• Ask different levels of questions and encourage students to generate questions. • Use a variety of ways for students to respond. • Incorporate sufficient wait time. • Teach self-monitoring, such as graphing progress.	• Use prompts to help students notice, find, and/or fix errors, and to write responses. • Encourage students with prompts of encouragement.	• Monitor initial independent practice. • Integrate practice of new knowledge/skills with those previously taught. • Encourage application and/or generalization in a variety of contexts. • Have students practice until mastery or automaticity is achieved.

Appendix D
Assumptions for Administrators

The following assumptions guide the deductions and questions for administrators found in each section of this booklet.

- **Efficacy**—noting the ability of the school, at its best, to improve the educational achievements of a student.
- **Efficiency**—obtaining the greatest achievement for the student at the lowest cost to the school.
- **Optimality**—evaluating the costs and benefits of the achievement of the student and achieving the best balance between the two.
- **Acceptability**—adapting the services provided to the student to the wishes of the parents and the student.
- **Legitimacy**—providing services to the student that are acceptable to society at large.
- **Equity**—distributing services to the student fairly, regardless of the characteristics or attributes of the student or his or her parents.
- **Cost**—providing the greatest student achievement at the lowest cost while optimizing the cost/benefit ratio.

Assumptions for Administrators for the Team of Persons Who Determine Special Education Eligibility

Design the team. Don't assume that an individual's particular credentials, knowledge, or experience will "qualify" him or her to be an effective member of the team making special education decisions. The school administrator must identify and assign persons to the team who have competence and the ability to work with others, can handle ambiguity, and are willing and able to give and take feedback.

Frame the challenge, charge, problem, or decision. The school administrator is the only professional who must be present in the special education process who is likely to see the issues in organizational, not technical or personal, terms. Therefore, the school administrator must frame the decisions and processes of special education for the team in ways that reach beyond the individual students.

Create an environment that feels psychologically safe for the team members. Unless team members feel safe in expressing their concerns or providing their professional input, solutions to problems will be limited. Only the school administrator on the team has the power and responsibility to neutralize fear of embarrassment, open the discussions for exchange, protect persons present from unproductive criticism, and confer equal value on individual comments.

Structure team learning. The school administrator must structure the context for the team to engage in learning through the current actions and discussions of the team rather than from later analysis. In the decision-making context, the processes of confrontation, criticism, conflict, suggestion, and admission of mistakes are processes necessary for the team to learn. Such team learning will occur only if the school administrator structures the environment for such learning. One clear implication of the process of structuring team learning is that the school administrator must maintain, if at all possible, the same membership of the team so that prior learning can be applied to new contexts and to issues of new students who are under consideration for special education services. Additional persons who can add critical information, such as the parent and the student's teacher(s), can be added to the team along the way. Assigning to the decision-making team whoever happens to be available will not foster team learning.

Require data, and multiple analyses of that data, from professional, community, and family perspectives and sources. The school administrator must be prepared to ask whether sufficient and appropriate data are available to the team. The school administrator has the responsibility to validate psychometric tests and assessments and other data brought to the decision-making processes.

Structure accountability. Only the school administrator has the power to insist that processes of accountability for the decisions of the team are described and sequenced for understanding their effects in future reviews. The time frame for acquisition and types of data to be developed for accountibility purposes must be stipulated at the time of the decisions. However, only the school administrator is likely to see the accountibility data and processes from an organizational perspective. He or she can insist upon processes that are scientifically valid, ethical, and moral; provide needed feedback for the next decision-making moment; and provide evidence of the efficacy of the educational interventions selected. Additionally, the school administrator is the only member of the team who would typically see the necessity of structuring accountability data from individual students in ways that allow aggregation of data from numbers of students to provide information on the general organizational effectiveness of ARD decisions and instructional and behavioral interventions for students experiencing difficulties.